



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Economic Services Administration
Division of Child Care and Early Learning
P.O. Box 45480, Olympia, Washington 98504-5480

March 10, 2005

TO: Interested Child Care Parties

FROM: Joel Roalkvam, Licensing Policy Administrator
Division of Child Care & Early Learning

SUBJECT: COOPERATIVE EXCHANGE OF CHILD CARE

Parents who exchange child care on a mutually cooperative basis are exempt from the licensing requirements imposed on child care centers and family home child care under RCW 74.15.020(2)(d). This memorandum sets forth Division of Child Care and Early Learning policy governing the parameters of this licensing exemption.

Background

Child care can be provided through a variety of cooperative models. These range from the most casual arrangement of parents agreeing to take turns babysitting each others' children without exchanging money, to child care supported by monthly tuition and requiring some level of parental contribution of time providing care.

RCW 74.15.020(2)(d) specifies that if "parents on a mutually cooperative basis exchange care of one another's children" they are exempt from licensing requirements. Due to the restrictive language of this provision, not all cooperative child care arrangements qualify for this exemption from child care licensing requirements.

DCCEL has determined that the language of this licensing exemption includes only arrangements in which parents exchange child care between one another. This necessarily excludes child care cooperative models in which the cooperative employs staff to provide care and in which parents pay for child care, regardless of parent participation requirements in the child care.

Policy

DCCEL will consider a child care arrangement between parents to qualify for the exemption to child care licensing requirements under RCW 74.15.020(2)(d) when:

- Parents provide all child care on an exchange basis.
- Parents do not pay for the care provided.

An example of an arrangement that would qualify for this exemption is that in which parents earn child care time from other parents by providing child care.

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Cooperative child care operations that do not qualify for the licensing exemption under RCW 74.15.020(2)(d) must be properly licensed unless another exemption applies. For example, cooperative preschools that are exempt from child care licensing requirements under RCW 74.15.020(2)(g), are unaffected by this policy memorandum.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the DCCEL Policy unit. Thank you.

cc: Rachael Langen